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AN

ACCOUNT

OF THE

ENDEAVOURS

USED BY THE

SOCIETY

FOR THE

PROPAGATION of the GOSPEL in
FOREIGN PARTS,

To instruct the NEGROE SLAVES in NEW YORK.

TOGETHER WITH

Two of Bp. GIBSON's Letters
on that Subject.

Being an Extract from Dr. Humphreys's Historical Account of the Incorporated Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, from its Foundation to the Year 1728. Printed at London in 1730.

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ACCOUNT, &c.

THE *Negro* Slaves, even in those Colonies where the Society send Missionaries, amount to many Thousands of Persons, of both Sexes, and all Ages, and most of them are very capable of receiving Instruction. Even the grown Persons brought from *Guinea* quickly learn *English* enough to be understood in ordinary Matters; but the Children, born of *Negro* Parents in the Colonies, are bred up entirely in the *English* Language.

The Society looked upon the Instruction and Conversion of the *Negroes* as a principal Branch of their Care; esteeming it a great Reproach to the Christian Name, that so many Thousands of Persons should continue in the same State of *Pagan* Darkness, under a Christian Government, and living in Christian Families, as they lay before under, in their own Heathen Countries. The Society, immediately from their first Institution, strove to promote their Conversion; and inasmuch as their Income would not enable them to send Numbers of Catechists,

sufficient to instruct the *Negroes*, yet they resolved to do their utmost, and, at least, to give this Work the Mark of their highest Approbation.

They wrote therefore to all their Missionaries, that they should use their best Endeavours, at proper Times, to instruct the *Negroes*; and should especially take Occasion to recommend it zealously to the Masters, or to order their Slaves, at convenient Times, to come to them, that they might be instructed. These Directions had a good Effect, and some Hundreds of *Negroes* have been instructed, received Baptism, and been admitted to the Communion, and lived very orderly Lives. The Reader may remember, there is frequently Mention made, in the Account of the Labours of the Missionaries, of many *Negroes*, at different Times, instructed and baptized; to relate the Particulars here would be too circumstantial, and altogether useless.

It is Matter of Commendation to the Clergy, that they have done thus much in so great and difficult a Work. But alas! what is the Instruction of a few Hundreds, in several Years, with Respect to the many Thousands uninstructed, unconverted, living, dying, utter *Pagans*! It must be confessed, what hath been done is as Nothing, with Regard to what a true Christian would hope to see effected. But the Difficulties the Clergy meet with in this good Work are exceeding great. The first is, the *Negroes* want Time to receive Instruction. Several Masters allow their *Negroes* Sundays only for Rest; and then the Minister of a Parish is fully employed in other Duties, and cannot attend them: Many Planters, in order to free themselves from the Trouble and Charge
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of feeding and cloathing their Slaves, allow them one Day in a Week, to clear Ground and plant it, to subsist themselves and Families. Some allow all Saturday, some half Saturday and Sunday; others allow only Sunday. How can the *Negro* attend for Instruction, who on half Saturday and Sunday is to provide Food and Raiment for himself and Family for the Week following? The *Negro* will urge in his own Excuse, that the Support of himself, and all that is dear to him, doth absolutely depend upon this, his necessary Labour, on Saturday and Sunday. If this be not strictly justifiable, yet it is sure, the miserable Man's Plea will engage the Reader's Compassion.

This is the Case in some Colonies, in others it differs: In some Places, the Slaves do the whole Labour of the Country, in the Field; in others, they are used only as House Servants: Another Difficulty arises from the Habitations and Settlements of the Masters being at great Distances from each other in most Places in the Colonies; for which Reason, neither can a Minister go to many Families, if the *Negroes* were allowed Time to attend him; nor can a proper Number of them assemble together at one Place, without considerable Loss of Time to their Masters. But the greatest Obstruction is, the Masters themselves do not consider enough the Obligation which lies upon them to have their Slaves instructed. Some have been so weak as to argue, the *Negroes* had no Souls; others, that they grew worse by being taught, and made Christians: I would not mention these, if they were not popular Arguments now, *because they have no Foundation in Reason or Truth.*

After

After the Society had given the general Order mentioned before, to all their Missionaries, for the Instruction of the Slaves, they agreed to use another Method, which they believed would more successfully promote this Work. They opened a Catechising School for the Slaves at *New-York*, in the Year 1704, in which City there were computed to be about 1500 *Negroes* and *Indian* Slaves, and many of their Masters well disposed to have them made Christians. The Society hoped this Example set, might kindle a Zeal in some other good People, to carry on this Work, which they were unable to effect; and to erect Schools for the Instruction of the *Negroes*, and employ Catechists to teach them at appointed Times; and that the Legislature in the Colonies, would, by a Law, oblige all Slaves to attend for their Instruction. The Society found soon, it was not easy to procure a Person proper to be a Catechist. Mr. *Elias Neau* a Layman, then living in *New-York* City, as a Trader, was represented to be the properest Person for that Office. He was by Nation a *Frenchman*, had made a Confession of the *Protestant* Religion in *France*, for which he had been confined several Years in Prison, and seven Years in the Gallies. When he got released, he went to *New-York*, and traded there, and had the Character, from People of all Persuasions, of a Man of Piety, of sober Deportment, and serious Life.

He accepted of the Offer of being Catechist; and his former Sufferings on the Account of his Religion, did, with great Advantage, recommend him to be a Teacher of the Christian Faith; and his Humility enabled him to bear with the many Inconveniencies

Inconveniencies in teaching those poor People. He entered upon his Office, in the Year 1704, with great Diligence. At first he was obliged to go from House to House, to instruct the *Negroes*, this was out of Measure laborious; afterwards he got Leave, that they should come to his House; this was a considerable Relief. There were two Obstructions still; the Time was much too short, and the Place was inconvenient, for teaching the great Number of *Negroes*. A little Time in the Dusk of the Evening, after hard Labour all Day, was the whole Time allowed them for Learning, and for Relaxation, and to visit their Wives and Children; which were generally in other Families, not in their Masters. At this Time their Bodies were so fatigued, that their Attention could not be great. They were dull and sleepy, and remembered they must rise early the next Day to their Labour. The Place also was incommodious, being the uppermost Floor in Mr. Neau's House, which, though very large for a private House, yet was not able to hold, conveniently, a small Part of the Slaves which might resort thither.

Besides, the *Negroes* were much discouraged from embracing the Christian Religion, upon Account of the very little Regard shewed them in any religious Respect. Their Marriages were performed by mutual Consent only, without the Blessing of the Church; they were buried by those of their own Country or Complexion, in the common Field, without any Christian Office; perhaps some ridiculous Heathen Rites were performed at the Grave, by some of their own People. No Notice was given of their being sick,

sick, that they might be visited ; on the contrary, frequent Discourses were made in Conversation, that they had no Souls, and perished as the Beasts.

Mr. *Neau* contended with these Difficulties, and, notwithstanding all, proved an Instrument of bringing many to a Knowledge of the Christian Faith. He took great Pains in reading to them, in making short Collections out of Books on the Catechism, and in making an Abstract of the historical Part of the Scriptures; so that many, who could not read, could yet by Memory repeat the History of the Creation of the World, the Flood, the giving of the Law, the Birth, Miracles, and Crucifixion of our Lord, and the chief Articles and Doctrines of Christianity.

This was a Work of great Pains and Humility ; Mr. *Neau* performed it diligently ; discoursing familiarly with those poor People, and labouring earnestly to accommodate his Discourse to their Capacities. His Labours were very successful ; a considerable Number of the Slaves could give a sufficient Account of the Grounds of their Faith ; as several of the Clergy who examined them publicly before they gave them Baptism, have acquainted the Society.

In the mean Time, while the Society were thinking of farther Ways to advance this Work, a Calamity happened which mightily discouraged this Country from promoting the Instruction of their Slaves. In the Year 1712, a considerable Number of *Negroes* of the *Carmantee* and *Pappa* Nations, formed a Plot to destroy all the *English* in order to obtain their Liberty ; and kept their Conspiracy so secret, that there was no Suspicion
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of it, till it came to the very Execution. However, the Plot was, by God's Providence, happily defeated. The Plot was this: The *Negroes* set Fire to a House in *York* City, on a Sunday Night, in *April*, about the going down of the Moon. The Fire alarmed the Town, who from all Parts ran to it; the Conspirators planted themselves in several Streets and Lanes leading to the Fire, and shot or stabbed the People as they were running to it. Some of the Wounded escaped, and acquainted the Government, and presently, by the Signal of firing a great Gun from the Fort, the Inhabitants were called under Arms, and prevented from running to the Fire. A Body of Men was soon raised, which easily scattered the *Negroes*; they had killed about eight Persons, and wounded 12 more. In their Flight some of them shot themselves, others their Wives, and then themselves; some absconded a few Days, and then killed themselves for Fear of being taken; but a great many were taken, and 18 of them suffered Death. This wicked Conspiracy was at first apprehended to be general among all the *Negroes*, and opened the Mouths of many, to speak against giving the *Negroes* Instruction. Mr. *Neau* durst hardly appear abroad for some Days, his School was blamed as the main Occasion of this barbarous Plot. But upon the Trial of these Wretches, there were but two, of all his School, so much as charged with the Plot; and only one was a baptized Man, and in the Peoples Heat, upon slender Evidence, perhaps too hastily condemned; for soon after he was acknowledged to be innocent by the common Voice. The other was not baptized; it ap-

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peared plain that he was in the Conspiracy, but guiltless of his Master's Murder, Mr. *Hooglands*, an eminent Merchant. Upon full Trial, the guilty *Negroes* were found to be such as never came to Mr. *Neau's* School; and what is very observable, the Persons, whose *Negroes* were found to be most guilty, were such as were the declared Opposers of making them Christians.

However, a great Jealousy was now raised, and the common Cry was very loud, against instructing the *Negroes*. The Common Council of *New-York* City made an Order, forbidding the *Negroes* to go about the Streets after Sun-set, without Lanthorns and Candles; this was in Effect, forbidding them to go to Mr. *Neau's* School, for none of them could get Lanthorns, or come to him before Sun-set. But some Time after, the more serious and moderate People abated of this Violence. It appeared to be a Plot of a few only, not a general one of all the *Negroes*, no Consequence attended the Action, and People grew more composed. *Robert Hunter*, Esq. then Governor of the Province, observed their Fears were ill-grounded, and that Mr. *Neau's* Scholars were not the guilty *Negroes*, and therefore, in order to support the Design of instructing them, he was pleased to visit the School, attended by the Society's Missionaries, and several Persons of Note, and publicly declared his Approbation of the Design; and afterwards in a Proclamation put out against Immorality and Vice, he recommended it to the Clergy of the Country, to exhort their Congregations from the Pulpit, to promote the Instruction of the *Negroes*.

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This gave new Life again to the Work, and the Negroes frequented Mr. *Neau's* School, several were instructed, afterwards examined publicly in the Church, before the Congregation, by the Reverend Mr. *Vesey*, gave a very satisfactory Account of their Faith, and received Baptism. The Society had Accounts, from Time to Time, of Mr. *Neau's* Diligence and good Success; particularly one very ample Testimonial signed by the Governor of the Country (*Robert Hunter, Esq.*) the Council, the Mayor, and Recorder of *New-York*, and the two Chief Justices; setting forth, 'That Mr. *Neau* had demeaned himself in all Things, as a good Christian and a good Subject; that in his Station of Catechist, he had, to the great Advancement of Religion in general, and the particular Benefit of the free *Indians*, *Negro* Slaves, and other Heathens in those Parts, with indefatigable Zeal and Application, performed that Service three Times a Week; and that they did sincerely believe, that, as Catechist, he did, in a very eminent Degree, deserve the Countenance, Favour, and Protection of the Society.'

The Society were fully satisfied with Mr. *Neau's* Behaviour, and continued to send him Numbers of Catechisms, and of small Tracts of Devotion and Instruction, to give among the Slaves and Servants at his Discretion. Mr. *Neau* persevered with the same Diligence, till the Year 1722, in which he died, much regretted by all who knew his Labours. Mr. *Huddleston*, then Schoolmaster in *New-York*, did for some Time supply his Place, and used to teach the *Negroes*

in the Church Steeple, every Sunday before Sermon, and at his own House after Sermon. In a little Time the Society sent the Reverend Mr. *Wetmore* to be Catechist there, and received Accounts of his discharging his Duty diligently. That he attended Catechising every Wednesday and Friday, and Sunday Evening, at his own House; and in the Church, every Sunday before Evening Service, where he had sometimes near 200 Children, Servants and *Negroes*. He afterwards desired to be appointed Missionary at *Rye* in that Government, and the Society complied with his Request. Soon after his Removal, the Rector, Church-Wardens, and Vestry of *Trinity* Church in *New-York*, made a Representation to the Society, of the great Need of a Catechist in that City, there being about 1400 *Negroes* and *Indian* Slaves there, a considerable Number of which had been instructed in the Principles of Christianity by the late Mr. *Neau*, and had received Baptism, and were Communicants in their Church. The Society were very willing to comply with this Request, and sent the Reverend Mr. *Colgan* in 1726, to be Catechist there; and here he begins his School with Success, hath 30, 40, or 50 *Negroes* at a Time, attending Catechism, and is preparing several for Baptism. He continues now there.

In this manner have the Society exerted themselves, to promote the Instruction of the *Negroes*; but they are sensible the Means used are not proportionate to the End. One School only opened, is but a small Matter; because the Missionaries, in their large Parishes, are fully employed, without this additional Labour. There ought to be a Catechist supported, in
every

every Colony, nay, every large Town, to carry on this Work effectually. But there remains one Obstruction, which, if not removed, will defeat all possible Endeavours. The Masters of the Slaves must be persuaded to allow them reasonable Time to be instructed, and at least *permit* them to attend the Catechist. For if the Masters command them not to attend, or will allow them no Time for that Purpose, this Work is impracticable. On the other Hand, it hath appeared plain to the Society, that it might easily be carried on, if the Masters concurred. There are some Instances, where the *Negroes* have, in a little Time, gained a sufficient Knowledge of our Faith, and been induced to lead sober Lives, when their Masters favoured their Instruction. The Reverend Mr. *Taylor*, lately Missionary at St. *Andrew's* Parish in *South-Carolina*, wrote to the Society in 1713, an Instance of this Nature; which, for the just Honour of the two religious Gentlemen mentioned, ought not to be passed over here. ‘Mrs. *Haige* and Mrs. *Edwards*, who
‘ came lately to this Plantation, have taken extraordinary Pains to instruct a considerable
‘ Number of *Negroes* in the Principles of the
‘ Christian Religion, and to reclaim and reform
‘ them. The wonderful Success they met with,
‘ in about half a Year’s Time, encouraged me to
‘ go and examine those *Negroes*, about their
‘ Knowledge in Christianity; they declared to
‘ me their Faith in the chief Articles of our Religion, which they sufficiently explained; they
‘ rehearsed by Heart, very distinctly, the Creed,
‘ the Lord’s Prayer, and Ten Commandments;
‘ fourteen of them gave me so great Satisfaction,
‘ and

‘ and were so very desirous to be baptized, that
 ‘ I thought it my Duty to do it on the last Lord’s
 ‘ Day. I doubt not but these Gentlewomen will
 ‘ prepare the rest of them for Baptism in a little
 ‘ Time; and I hope the good Example of these
 ‘ two Gentlewomen will provoke at least some
 ‘ Masters and Mistresses to take the same Care
 ‘ and Pains with their poor *Negroes*.’

The Clergy of *South-Carolina* did, in a joint Letter to the Society, after a Representation made of the State of the Church there, acquaint them, that Mr. *Skeen*, his Lady, and Mrs. *Haige* his Sister, did use great Care to have their *Negroes* instructed and baptized. And the Reverend Mr. *Varnod*, Missionary in that Parish, did at the same Time write to the Society, that he had baptized, in the foregoing Year, eight *Negro* Children, belonging to Mr. *Skeen* and Mrs. *Haige*, who, he says, ‘took great Pains to have their
 ‘ Slaves instructed in our Faith, and that, at once,
 ‘ he had 19 *Negroes* Communicants.’

The Society have been always sensible, the most effectual Way to convert the *Negroes*, was by engaging their Masters, to countenance and promote their Conversion. The late Bishop of *St. Asaph*, Dr. *Fleetwood*, preached a Sermon before this Society in the Year 1711, setting forth the Duty of instructing the *Negroes* in the Christian Religion. The Society thought this so useful a Discourse, that they printed and dispersed abroad in the Plantations great Numbers of that Sermon in the same Year; and lately, in the Year 1725, reprinted the same, and dispersed again large Numbers. The present Bishop of *London* (Dr. *Gibson*) became a second Advocate for the Conversion

version of the *Negroes*; and wrote two Letters on this Subject: The first, Addressed to the *Masters and Mistresses of Families in the English Plantations abroad*, exhorting them to encourage and promote the Instruction of their *Negroes in the Christian Faith*. The Second, to the *Missionaries there*; directing them to distribute the said Letter, and exhorting them to give their Assistance, towards the Instruction of the *Negroes within their several Parishes*.

The Society were persuaded, this was the true Method to remove the great Obstruction of their Conversion, and, hoping so particular an Application to the Masters and Mistresses, from the See of *London*, would have the strongest Influence, they printed ten Thousand Copies of the Letter to the *Masters and Mistresses*, which have been sent to all the Colonies on the Continent, and to all our Islands in the *West-Indies*, to be distributed among the Masters of Families, and other Inhabitants. The Society have received Accounts, that these Letters have influenced many Masters of Families, to have their *Negroes* instructed; and hope they will have at length the desired Effect.

The Bishop of *London* soon after wrote *An Address to Serious Christians among ourselves, to assist the Society for Propagating the Gospel in carrying on this Work*; a Number of Copies whereof hath been printed and dispersed in several Places in *England*. The *Address and Letters* follow next.

An.

An ADDRESS to Serious Christians among ourselves, to assist the Society for Propagating the Gospel, in carrying on the Work of instructing the Negroes in our Plantations abroad.

THE Design of the two following Letters, which have been lately sent to our Plantations abroad, is, I. To convince the Masters and Mistresses there, of the Obligation they are under, to instruct their Negroes in the Christian Religion. II. To answer the Objections that are usually made against it: And III. To exhort the Ministers and Schoolmasters within the several Parishes, to assist in this good Work, as far as the proper Business of their Station will permit.

But the Negroes in several of the Plantations being vastly numerous, and the Parishes very large; the utmost that Ministers and Schoolmasters can do, will fall far short of the necessary Attendance and Application which this Work requires. And it is too plain from Experience, that very many of the Masters and Mistresses are either unable or unwilling to provide for the Instruction of those poor Creatures, at least in such a Way as may effectually attain the End; and wherever that is the Case, they are unavoidably condemned, in a Christian Country, to live and die in Heathen Idolatry, and in an utter Ignorance of the true God.

This

This is a very *deplorable Sight* in a Country where the Gospel of CHRIST is profess'd and publicly preached; and every Christian who believes the promises of the Gospel, and is concerned in earnest for the Honour of CHRIST, and the Salvation of Souls, must be sensibly affected with the Thought of it. Which will of Course lead and dispose him to countenance and support any Measures that shall be entered into, for doing Justice to our common Christianity, and delivering the *Protestant* Name from so great a *Reproach*. For, to do Right to the *Papist*, both the Inhabitants of their Plantations abroad, and the several Countries in *Europe* to which they belong, have shewn a laudable Care and Concern in this Matter. Only, it is to be wished, that their Care to see them *instructed* were equal to their Zeal to have them baptized; and that greater Strefs were laid upon bringing them to a Knowledge of the Christian Faith, than upon barely giving them the *Name* of Christians.

The *Society for Propagating the Gospel in Foreign Parts* have this Affair much at Heart; and, having lately had it under their Consideration, are unanimously of Opinion, That nothing would give so quick and effectual a Progress to the Work, as the sending *Catechists* from hence: Whose *only* Business it should be, to instruct the Negroes, within particular Districts to be assigned to them, and who, having no Avocations of any Kind, would be at full Liberty to attend the most proper Times and Seasons for Instruction, and employing their Thoughts wholly in that Way, would be far better acquainted with the proper Methods of proceeding in the Work, and also

pursue those Methods more closely, than any *Occasional* Instructor can be supposed to do.

But the present yearly Subscriptions of the Society are employed and exhausted in maintaining Ministers in the Plantations, to officiate to our own People, in Places where they are not able to support the Charge themselves, and where they would quickly fall into a State of Heathenism, or something like it, if Provision were not made for a standing Ministry among them. So that the Society can be in no Condition to maintain Catechists for the Instruction of the Negroes, unless pious and well-disposed Christians among ourselves shall lay this Matter to Heart, and enable them to proceed in it by Contributions given for that *Purpose*, and to be solely *appropriated* to that Use.

The Piety, as well as the Necessity and Importance, of promoting this Work, and entering into proper Methods for that End, are set forth in the following Letters, to which the Reader is referred. But lest this should seem to be only the Concern of the Planters abroad, I will add some Considerations which may induce *all Christians*, as such, to think it a Work worthy of their Regard, and incline them to further it according to their Power and Ability.

The First is, That as the Christian Church upon Earth is one, being joined together in the same Faith, and in the common Bond of Love and Unity, under CHRIST its Head; so the supporting and enlarging of that Church, is justly to be esteemed the *Common Cause* of Christianity, or, in other Words, the general Concern of Christians, all the World over. And if we do not *de-*
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fire to see it propagated throughout the World, it is a certain Sign, that we are not sufficiently concerned for the Honour of CHRIST, nor duly sensible of the Greatness of the Gospel Promises, and of the inestimable Value of a Soul.

From hence it follows, that altho' our own Families, Relations, Neighbours, and Country, claim the first Place in our Care and Concern for Religion, yet no Distance of Place, how great soever it be, is a sufficient Excuse from *endeavouring* to propagate the Gospel where we see there is Need, and a fit Opportunity offers, and it is fairly in our Power. On the contrary, the more remote we are from the Country to which we do at any Time extend our Care and Assistance, the greater Testimony it is of our Zeal for the Glory of God, and the Salvation of Souls.

But, *Thirdly*, The Souls for which I am now pleading, have a more particular Claim to our Regard, as they are truly a Part of our own Nation, and live under the same Government with ourselves, and, which is more, contribute much by their Labour to the Support of our Government, and the Increase of the Trade and Wealth of this Kingdom. In the following Letter, the Masters in the Plantations are put in Mind of the great Profit arising to them from the Labour of the Negroes, as one Argument why they should be willing to be at some Expence in instructing them. And the same Argument extends, in Proportion, to this Nation in general, which is greatly benefited by their Labour; and more particularly does it extend to such among us, who either have Possessions in those Parts, or have been enriched by Trading to them.

As the Progress which one single Catechist makes, may be very great, when it is his *whole* Employment; so every Person who contributes to the Maintenance of that one, has the Satisfaction to think that he is an Instrument under God, of converting and saving a proportionable Number of Souls. Some few Seeds cast into this Ground, and watered by the Blessing of God, may produce an Increase exceeding great, and will be no small Addition to our Happiness in Heaven. But whatever the *Success* be, such sincere Testimonies of a *Desire* to see the Gospel propagated, and such charitable *Endeavours* for the Salvation of our Fellow-Creatures, will most assuredly find a very plentiful Reward from the Hands of God.

And may it please Him to open the Hearts of Christians, and to dispose them, according to their several Abilities, to assist in carrying on this good Work, for the Glory of his Name, and the Eternal Welfare of so many Thousand Souls.

L E T T E R



L E T T E R I.

The Bishop of LONDON's Letter to the Masters and Mistresses of Families in the English Plantations abroad; exhorting them to encourage and promote the Instruction of their Negroes in the Christian Faith.

THE Care of the Plantations abroad being committed to the Bishop of LONDON as to Religious Affairs; I have thought it my Duty to make particular Enquiries into the State of Religion in those Parts, and to learn, among other Things, what Numbers of Slaves are employed within the several Governments, and what Means are used for their Instruction in the Christian Faith. I find the Numbers are prodigiously great; and am not a little troubled, to observe how small a Progress has been made in a Christian Country, towards the delivering those poor Creatures from the Pagan Darkness and Superstition in which they were bred, and the making them Partakers of the Light of the Gospel, and of the Blessings and Benefits belonging to it. And, which is yet more to be lamented, I find there has not only been very little Progress made

made in the Work, but that all *Attempts* towards it have been, by too many, industriously disregarded and hindered; partly, by magnifying the *Difficulties* of the Work beyond what they really are; and partly, by mistaken Suggestions of the Change which *Baptism* would make in the Condition of the *Negroes*, to the Loss and Disadvantage of their Masters.

As to the *Difficulties*; it may be pleaded, That the *Negroes* are *grown Persons* when they come over, and that having been accustomed to the Pagan Rites and Idolatries of their own Country, they are prejudiced against all other Religions, and more particularly against the Christian, as forbidding all that Licentiousness which is usually practised among the Heathens. But if this were a good Argument against attempting the Conversion of *Negroes*, it would follow, that the Gospel is never to be farther propagated than it is at present, and that no Endeavours are to be used for the Conversion of Heathens, at any Time, or in any Country whatsoever; because all Heathens have been accustomed to Pagan Rites and Idolatries, and to such vicious and licentious Living as the Christian Religion forbids. But yet, God be thanked, Heathens have been converted, and Christianity propagated, in all Ages, and almost all Countries, through the Zeal and Diligence of pious and good Men; and this, without the Help of Miracles. And if the present Age be as zealous and diligent in pursuing the proper *Means* of Conversion, we have no Reason to doubt, but that the Divine Assistance is, and will be, the same in all Ages.

But

But a farther Difficulty is, that they are utter Strangers to our Language, and we to theirs ; and the Gift of Tongues being now ceased, there are no Means left of instructing them in the Doctrines of the Christian Religion. And this, I own, is a real Difficulty, as long as it continues, and as far as it reaches. But, if I am rightly informed, many of the Negroes, who are grown Persons when they come over, do of themselves attain so much of our Language, as enables them to understand, and to be understood, in Things which concern the ordinary Business of Life ; and they who can go so far of their own Accord, might doubtless be carried much farther, if proper Methods and Endeavours were used to bring them to a competent Knowledge of our Language, with a pious View to the instructing them in the Doctrines of our Religion. At least, some of them, who are more capable and more serious than the rest, might be easily instructed both in our Language and Religion, and then be made use of to convey Instruction to the rest, in their own Language. And this, one would hope, may be done with great Ease, wherever there is a hearty and sincere Zeal for the Work.

But whatever Difficulties there may be in instructing those who are *grown-up* before they are brought over ; there are not the like Difficulties in the Case of their Children, who are born and bred in our Plantations, who have never been accustomed to Pagan Rites and Superstitions, and who may easily be trained up, like all other Children, to any Language whatsoever, and particularly to our own ; if the making them good Christians be sincerely the Desire and In-
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tention of those, who have the Property in them, and the Government over them.

But supposing the Difficulties to be much greater than I imagine; they are not such as render the Work *impossible*, so as to leave no Hope of any *Degree* of Success; and nothing less than an *Impossibility* of doing any good at all, can warrant our giving over and laying aside all Means and Endeavours, where the Propagation of the Gospel, and the saving of Souls, are immediately concerned.

Many Undertakings look far more impracticable before Trial, than they are afterwards found to be in Experience; especially, where there is not a good Heart to go about them: And it is frequently observed, that small Beginnings, when pursued with Resolution, are attended with great and surprizing Success. But in no Case is the Success more great and surprizing, than when good Men engage in the Cause of God and Religion, out of a just Sense of the inestimable Value of a Soul, and in a full and well-grounded Assurance that their honest Designs and Endeavours for the promoting Religion will be supported by a special Blessing from God.

I am loath to think so hardly of any *Christian* Master, as to suppose that he can *deliberately binder* his Negroes from being instructed in the Christian Faith; or, which is the same Thing, that he can, upon sober and mature Consideration of the Case, finally resolve to deny them the *Means* and *Opportunities* of Instruction: Much less may I believe, that he can, after he has seriously weighed this Matter, permit them to labour on the Lord's Day; and least of all, that he

he can put them under a kind of *Necessity* of labouring on that Day, to provide themselves with the *Conveniencies* of Life; since our Religion so plainly teaches us, That God has given one Day in seven to be a Day of Rest, not only to Man, but to the Beasts: That it is a Day which is appointed by Him for the Improvement of the Soul, as well as the Refreshment of the Body; and that it is a Duty incumbent upon Masters, to take Care that all Persons, who are under their Government, keep this Day holy, and employ it to the pious and wise Purposes, for which God, our great Lord and Master, intended it. Nor can I think so hardly of any Missionary, who shall be desired by the Master to direct and assist in the Instruction of his Negroes (either on that Day, or on any other, when he shall be more at Leisure,) as to suppose that he will not embrace such Invitation with the utmost Readiness and Chearfulness, and give all the Help that is fairly consistent with the necessary Duties of his Function, as a Parochial Minister.

If it be said, That no Time can be spared from the daily Labour and Employment of the Negroes, to instruct them in the Christian Religion; this is in Effect to say, that no Consideration of propagating the Gospel of God, or saving the Souls of Men, is to make the *least Abatement* from the temporal Profit of the Masters; and that God cannot, or will not, make up the little they may lose in that Way, by blessing and prospering their Undertakings by Sea and Land, as a just Reward of their Zeal for his Glory, and the Salvation of Mens Souls. In this Case, I may well reason as *St. Paul* does in

a Case not unlike it, that if they make you Partakers of their temporal Things (of their Strength and Spirits, and even of their Offspring) you ought to make them Partakers of your spiritual Things, though it should abate somewhat from the Profit which you might otherwise receive from their Labours. And considering the *Greatness* of the Profit that is received from their Labours, it might be hoped that all Christian Masters, those especially who are possessed of considerable Numbers, should also be at some small *Expence* in providing for the Instruction of those poor Creatures; and that others, whose Numbers are less, and who dwell in the same Neighbourhood, should *join* in the Expence of a common Teacher, for the Negroes belonging to them. The Society for propagating the Gospel in foreign Parts, are sufficiently sensible of the great Importance and Necessity of such an established and regular Provision for the Instruction of the Negroes, and earnestly wish and pray, that it may please God to put it into the Hearts of good Christians, to enable them to assist in the Work, by seasonable Contributions for that End; but at present their Fund does scarce enable them to answer the many Demands of Missionaries, for the Performance of Divine Service in the poorer Settlements, which are not in a Condition to maintain them at their own Charge.

But it is farther pleaded, That the Instruction of Heathens in the Christian Faith is in Order to their Baptism, and that not only the *Time* to be allowed for instructing them, would be an Abatement from the Profits of their Labour, but also that the *baptizing* them when instructed, would destroy both the Property, which

which the Masters have in them as Slaves bought with their Money, and the Right of selling them again at Pleasure ; and that the making them Christians, only makes them less diligent, and more ungovernable.

To which it may be very truly replied, That Christianity, and the embracing of the Gospel, does not make the least Alteration in Civil Property, or in any of the Duties which belong to Civil Relations ; but in all these Respects, it continues Persons just in the same State as it found them. The Freedom which Christianity gives, is a Freedom from the Bondage of Sin and Satan, and from the Dominion of Mens Lusts and Passions and inordinate Desires ; but as to their *outward* Condition, whatever that was before, whether bond or free, their being baptized, and becoming Christians, makes no manner of Change in it : As St. Paul has expressly told us, 1 Cor. vii. 20. where he is speaking directly to this very Point, *Let every Man abide in the same Calling wherein he was called ;* and at the 24th Verse, *Let every Man wherein he is called, therein abide with God.* And so far is Christianity from discharging Men from the Duties of the Station and Condition in which it found them, that it lays them under stronger Obligations to perform those Duties with the greatest Diligence and Fidelity, not only from the Fear of Men, but from a Sense of Duty to God, and the Belief and Expectation of a future Account. So that to say, that Christianity tends to make Men less observant of their Duty in any Respect, is a Reproach that it is very far from deserving ; and a Reproach, that is confuted by the whole Tenor of the Gospel Precepts, which inculcate upon all, and particularly upon

Servants (many of whom were then in the Condition of Slaves) a faithful and diligent Discharge of the Duties belonging to their several Stations, out of Conscience towards God : And it is also confuted by our own Reason, which tells us how much more forcible and constant the Restraint of *Conscience* is, than the Restraint of *Fear*; and last of all, it is confuted by Experience, which teaches us the great *Value* of those Servants who are truly religious, compared with those who have no Sense of Religion.

As to their being more ungovernable after Baptism, than before ; it is certain that the Gospel every where enjoins, not only Diligence and Fidelity, but also *Obedience*, for Conscience Sake ; and does not deprive Masters of any proper Methods of *enforcing* Obedience, where they appear to be necessary. Humanity forbids all cruel and barbarous Treatment of our Fellow-Creatures, and will not suffer us to consider a Being that is endowed with Reason, upon a Level with Brutes ; and Christianity takes not out of the Hand of Superiors any Degrees of Strictness and Severity, that fairly appear to be necessary for the preserving Subjection and Government. The general Law, both of Humanity and of Christianity, is Kindness, Gentleness, and Compassion, towards all Mankind, of what Nation or Condition soever they be ; and therefore we are to make the Exercise of those amiable Virtues, our *Choice* and *Desire*, and to have Recourse to severe and rigorous Methods unwillingly, and only out of Necessity. Of this *Necessity*, you yourselves remain the Judges, as much *after* they receive Baptism, as *before* ; so that *You* can be in no Danger of suffering by the Change ; and as to *Them*, the
greatest

greatest Hardships that the most severe Master can inflict upon them, is not to be compared to the Cruelty of keeping them in the State of Heathenism, and depriving them of the Means of Salvation, as reached forth to *all Mankind*, in the Gospel of CHRIST. And, in Truth, one great Reason why Severity is at all necessary to maintain Government, is the *Want* of Religion in those who are to be governed, and who therefore are not to be kept to their Duty by any Thing but *Fear* and *Terror*; than which there cannot be a more uneasy State, either to those who govern, or those who are governed.

That these Things may make the greater Impression upon you, let me beseech you to consider yourselves not only as Masters, but as *Christian* Masters, who stand obliged by your Profession to do all that your Station and Condition enable you to do, towards breaking the Power of Satan, and enlarging the Kingdom of CHRIST; and as having a great Opportunity put into your Hands, of helping-on this Work, by the Influence which God has given you over such a Number of Heathen Idolaters, who still continue under the Dominion of Satan. In the next Place, let me beseech you to consider *Them*, not barely as Slaves, and upon the same Level with labouring Beasts, but as *Men-Slaves* and *Women-Slaves*, who have the same Frame and Faculties with yourselves, and have Souls capable of being made eternally happy, and Reason and Understanding to receive Instruction in order to it. If they came from abroad, let it not be said, that they are as far from the Knowledge of CHRIST in a Christian Country, as when they dwelt among
Pagan

Pagan Idolaters. If they have been born among you, and have never breathed any Air but that of a Christian Country, let them not be as much Strangers to CHRIST, as if they had been transplanted, as soon as born, into a Country of Pagan Idolaters.

Hoping that these and the like Considerations will move you to lay this Matter seriously to Heart, and excite you to use the best Means in your Power towards so good and pious a Work; I cannot omit to suggest to you one of the best Motives that can be used, for disposing the Heathens to embrace Christianity; and that is *the good Lives of Christians*. Let them see, in you and in your Families, Examples of Sobriety, Temperance and Chastity, and of all the other Virtues and Graces of the Christian Life. Let them observe how strictly you oblige yourselves, and all that belong to you, to abstain from Curfing and Swearing, and to keep the Lord's-Day holy, and to attend the public Worship of God, and the Ordinances which CHRIST hath appointed in his Gospel. Make them sensible, by the general Tenour of your Behaviour and Conversation, that your inward Temper and Disposition is such as the Gospel requires, that is to say, mild, gentle, and merciful; and that as oft as you exercise Rigour and Severity, it is wholly owing to their Idleness or Obstinacy. By these Means, you will open their Hearts to Instruction, and *prepare* them to receive the Truths of the Gospel; to which if you add a pious *Endeavour* and *Concern* to see them duly instructed, you may become the Instrument of saving many Souls, and will not only secure a Blessing from God upon
all

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all your Undertakings in this World, but entitle yourselves to that distinguishing Reward in the next, which will be given to all those who have been zealous in their Endeavours to promote the Salvation of Men, and enlarge the Kingdom of CHRIST. And that you may be found in that Number at the great Day of Accounts, is the sincere Desire and earnest Prayer of

Your faithful Friend,

May 19,
1727.

Edm^r. London.



LETTER



L E T T E R II.

*The Bishop of LONDON's Letter to the
MISSIONARIES in the English Plantations;
Exhorting them to give their Assistance
towards the Instruction of the Negroes
of their several Parishes, in the Christian
Faith.*

GOOD BROTHER,

HAVING understood by many Letters from the Plantations, and by the Accounts of Persons who have come from thence, that very little Progress hath hitherto been made in the Conversion of the *Negroes* to the Christian Faith; I have thought it proper for me to lay before the Masters and Mistresses the Obligations they are under, to promote and encourage that pious and necessary Work. This I have done in a Letter directed to them; of which you will receive several Copies, in order to be distributed to those who have *Negroes* in your own Parish; and I must entreat you, when you put the Letter into their Hands, to enforce the Design of it by any farther Arguments that you shall think proper to be used, and also to assure them of your own Assistance in carrying on the Work.

I am

I am aware, that in the Plantations, where the Parishes are of so large Extent, the Care and Labour of the Parochial Ministers must be great ; but yet I persuade myself, that many vacant Hours may be spared from the other Pastoral Duties, to be bestowed on this ; and I cannot doubt of the Readiness of every Missionary in his own Parish to promote and further a Work so charitable to the Souls of Men, and so agreeable to the great End and Design of his Mission.

As to those Ministers who have Negroes of their own ; I cannot but esteem it their indispensable Duty to use their best Endeavours to instruct them in the Christian Religion, in order to their being baptized ; both because such Negroes are their proper and immediate Care, and because it is in vain to hope that other Masters and Mistresses will exert themselves in this Work, if they see it wholly neglected, or but coldly pursued, in the Families of the Clergy. So that any Degree of Neglect on your Part, in the Instruction of your own Negroes, would not only be the with-holding from *them* the inestimable Benefits of Christianity, but would evidently tend to the obstructing and defeating the *whole Design* in every other Family.

I would also hope, that the *Schoolmasters* in the several Parishes, Part of whose Business it is to instruct Youth in the Principles of Christianity, might contribute somewhat towards the carrying on this Work ; by being ready to bestow upon it some of their Leisure Time, and especially on the Lord's-Day, when both they and the Negroes are most at Liberty, and the Clergy are taken up with the public Duties of their Function.

tion. And though the Assistance they give to this pious Design, should not meet with any Reward from Men, yet their Comfort may be, that it is the Work of God, and will assuredly be rewarded by him ; and the less they are *obliged* to this on Account of any Reward they receive from *Men*, the *greater* will their Reward be from the Hands of God. I must therefore intreat you to recommend it to them in my Name, and to dispose them by all proper Arguments and Persuasions to turn their Thought seriously to it, and to be always ready to offer and lend their Assistance, at their Leisure Hours.

And so, not doubting of your ready and zealous Concurrence in promoting this important Work, and earnestly begging a Blessing from God upon this and all your other Pastoral Labours, I remain

Your affectionate Friend

and Brother,

May 19th
1727

Edm^r. London^r?

CONCLUSION

CONCLUSION

OF THE

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THE foregoing excellent *Letters*, of the Bishop of *London*, very clearly shew that the instructing of Slaves in the Christian Religion is the indispensable Duty of their Masters; and also that the Profession of Christianity makes no 'Alteration in civil Property, or in any of the 'Duties which belong to civil Relation;' *on the contrary, so far are Men* from being discharged by Baptism, from the Duties of their former Condition and Station, 'That it lays them under 'stronger Obligations to perform their Duties 'with the greatest Diligence and Fidelity; not 'only from the Fear of Men, but from a Sense 'of Duty to God, and the Belief and Expectation of a future Reward.'

But though it appears, that the Christian Religion neither incites those that are in Slavery to withdraw themselves from their Masters Service, nor affords them any Plea to neglect the Duty imposed upon them, yet, lest some Persons should be inclined to pervert the Meaning of the good Bishop, and insinuate from hence, that he

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seems to favour the Practice of Slave-holding, as if not at all repugnant to the Gospel ; let it be observed, that he is only *endeavouring* to promote the *Instruction* of the Slaves ; a Point which he might reasonably conclude the Masters would listen to for their own Interest ; but to have attempted this by disputing the Jurisdiction of the latter, would have been as impolitic as it was foreign to his Purpose.

It was one Thing to promote their Instruction, but another, and much more difficult Thing to restore them to their Liberty. Times were not ripe for the latter ; and as Nothing can be concluded in Favour of Slavery from what he has said, so neither can any Thing be concluded from his Silence concerning a Subject on which he professed not to write. He no where asserts that Christians may lawfully claim as their own private Property, even the Fruit of other Men's Labour, much less their Persons ; or that with a sound Conscience they may either buy, sell, or otherwise dispose of the unfortunate Slave, and all his unhappy Posterity ; and yet till this can be clearly proved from Scripture, (which it certainly never can) it is in vain for the Advocates of Slavery, to pretend to support themselves by any other Arguments ; not even the Authority (much less the Silence) of the greatest Man upon Earth will be sufficient for their Purpose.

Our English Government has indeed been induced by a supposed commercial Necessity, (on Account of the sultry Climate of our West Indian Colonies, or other temporal Reasons of State) to tolerate Slavery in those Parts ; so that
the

the Man-Trade is now become a considerable Branch of Commerce.

Nevertheless all Persons who are in the least concerned therein, ought seriously to examine, whether the supposed *absolute Property* claimed by Slave-dealers, or Slave-holders, may justly be esteemed consistent with the Christian Religion, though the temporal Condition of the Slaves themselves is not at all affected by it : For these two Points are so widely different from each other, that the proving of the latter adds no Authority or Confirmation to the general Opinions concerning the former.

I do not at present undertake formally to discuss this material Distinction, but chuse rather to refer all Persons, whom it may concern, to a careful Examination of their own Consciences, upon the Points which I shall propose : this I apprehend to be the shortest and most effectual Method ; as, in some Measure, it renders Proofs and Arguments less necessary, and thereby saves Trouble to the Reader, as well as Writer.

Let me therefore exhort such Persons, seriously to compare their selfish and tyrannical Practice of Slave-holding, with the disinterested and charitable Doctrines of the Gospel, which enforce universal Benevolence, or (in plain Scripture Language) ‘ *Good Will to all Men.*’

And let me earnestly advise them, as they love their own Souls, not to defer this necessary Examination from Day to Day ; lest, when it is too late for Repentance, they should perceive, with Horror and Amazement, that they have dishonoured their Christian Profession, by having complied with the depraved Customs of our Colonies.

Let

Let them carefully consider, whether the present imaginary Necessity of temporal Interest, would not appear, at such a Time, even in their own Eyes, to be a very frivolous Excuse for any the least Degree of Tyranny and Oppression; and much less for having maintained that uncharitable and selfish Doctrine of an *absolute Property* in our Fellow-Man; and for having impiously extended this horrid Usurpation, even to his Posterity for ever.

Are we not bound by the Christian Religion, to love our Neighbour* as ourselves? and to do unto all Men,† as we would they should do unto us? And shall we be able to flatter ourselves hereafter, that this heavenly Doctrine is not diametrically opposite to the abovementioned Notion of an *absolute Property* in the Persons of others?

‘Every idle Word that Men shall speak,’ (said our Lord) ‘they shall give an Account thereof in the Day of Judgement.’ (Matt. xii. 36.)

* Matt. xix. 19. ‘And *Thou shalt love thy Neighbour as thyself.*’ xxii. 37. ‘Jesus said unto him, (one of the Pharisees) Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy Heart, and with all thy Soul, and with all thy Mind. This is the first and great Commandment. And the second is like unto it, *Thou shalt love thy Neighbour as thyself.* On these two Commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.’

† ‘At the Time of our Saviour, the Pharisees had restrained the word *Neighbour*, to signify those of their own Friends; being of Opinion, that to hate their Enemy was not forbidden by their Law: But our Saviour informed them, that the *whole World* were their *Neighbours*, that they ought not to do to another, what they would not have done to themselves, and that this Charity ought to be extended even to their Enemies, Mat. v. 4. Luke x. 29.

Cruden’s Concordance, under the Word Neighbour.
But

But how much more at such a Time ought we to dread the Remembrance of any material Oppression of our Brethren ?

Crimes of this Kind are most heinous in the Sight of a righteous and merciful God !

For if even the neglecting an Opportunity of doing good, to those who stand in need of our Assistance, is considered as a personal Affront and Denial of Christ, † how much more guilty are *they*, who presume to afflict their Brethren, with open and manifest Oppression, grinding the Face of the Poor ?

How will they answer this ? Will they venture to assign as Reasons for their Injustice, the dark Complexion, ignominious Birth, gross Ignorance, or mean Capacity of the oppressed ? No, surely ! they cannot flatter themselves, that such Reasons are sufficient to extenuate the crying Sin of Oppression ; ‘ For in as much as ye have done it ‘ unto the *least* of these my Brethren, (said our ‘ Lord) ye have done it unto me.’ Mat. xxv. 40.

This Sentence, indeed, is applied in the Text to those who shall have done good to their Brethren ; yet by necessary Consequence it is equally applicable, (as in the 45th Verse) to those who neglect or injure them.

Is it not a Christian Doctrine that the Labourer is worthy of his Hire ?* And yet the poor

† ‘ In as much as ye did it not to one of *the least* of these, ‘ ye did it not to me.’ Matth. xxv. 45.

* *For the Labourer is worthy of his hire.* Luke x. 7.

• For the Scripture saith, thou shalt not muzzle the Ox ‘ that treadeth out the Corn : and the Labourer is worthy ‘ of his Reward.’ 1 Tim. v. 18.

Negroes

Negroe Slave is constrained, like a Beast, by beating, to work hard, without Hire or Recompence; and receives Nothing from the Hand of his unmerciful Master, but such a wretched Provision as will scarcely support him under his Fatigues.

The intolerable Hardships which the Slaves undergo, are sufficiently proved by the Shortness† of their Lives.

And what shall we say of the prevailing heathenish Practice, of permitting Slaves to profane the Lord's Day, by cultivating the little Spots of Ground allotted to them? or by selling the produce of the same, that they may be enabled to subsist at a less Expence to the Planter?

Is not this too plain an Indication of the very scanty Allowance usually granted for their Support? Can it be esteemed a just and honest Recompence for Labour, that a poor Wretch who works hard six Days in a Week, (or at the best five Days*) for his Master, shall be obliged to work

† For let it be considered, that out of their Stock of Eighty-Thousand in *Barbadoes*, there die every Year Five-Thousand Negroes more than are born in that Island: in Effect, this People is under a Necessity of being entirely renewed every *Sixteen Years*: And what must we think of the Management of a People, who, far from increasing greatly, as those who have no Loss by Wars ought to do, must, in so short a Space of Time as *Sixteen Years*, without foreign Recruits, be entirely consumed to a Man?

An Account of the European Settlements in America, Vol. II. Chap. xi. P. 129.

* ‘ But in our Plantations the Blacks work severely for
‘ five Days, without any Relaxation or Intermision, for
‘ the Benefit of the Master, and the other two Days they
‘ are obliged to Labour for their own Subsistence during
‘ the

work also on the Lord's Day for his own Maintenance, because of the Insufficiency of his Allowance? Is not this in Fact to deny him that Rest which is the just Due, even of the meanest Cattle?

And who are these miserable Creatures, that receive such barbarous Treatment from the Planter? Can we restrain our just Indignation, when we consider that they are undoubtedly his *Brethren*! his Neighbours! the Children of the same Father by Adoption, for whom CHRIST died as well as for the Planter himself!

Let the opulent Planter or Merchant prove, that his *Negro Slave* is not his Brother; or that he is not his Neighbour in the Scripture Sense of these Appellations.

But if he is not able to do so, how will he justify the buying and selling of his Brethren, as if they were of no more Consideration than his Cattle? The wearing them out with continual Labour, before they have lived out Half their Days? The severe whipping and torturing them even to Death, if they resist his insupportable Tyranny? Let the hardiest *Slave-holder* look forward to that tremendous Day, when he must give an Account to God of his Stewardship, and let him, seriously, consider, whether, at such a Time, he thinks he shall be able to satisfy himself, that any Act of buying and selling, or the

* the rest of the Week; and this, I imagine, with the
 * other Circumstances of great Severity, which depress their
 * Spirits, naturally cuts off great Numbers, as well as dis-
 * qualifies those who remain from supplying this Waste by
 * natural Propagation.'

*An Account of the European Settlements in America, Vol. II.
 Chap. xi. P. 125.*

Fate of War, or the Birth of Children in his House, Plantations or Territories, or any other Circumstances whatever, can give him such an *absolute Property* in the Persons of Men, as will justify *his retaining them as Slaves, and treating them as Beasts?*

Let him diligently consider, whether there will not always remain to the Slave a superior Property, or Right, to the Fruit of his own Labour; and more especially to his own Person, that Being which was given him by God, and which none but the Giver can justly claim?

But why should I insist only on the Danger of future Judgement? Is there not also a temporal Punishment, tho' not equally, yet greatly to be dreaded? The alarming Insurrections of the Slaves, which at different Times have happened in *Jamaica, St. Christopher, Carolina, &c.* and now lately at *Montserrat*, ought to be considered, by Slave-holders, as so many merciful Warnings of that just temporal Vengeance, which in all Probability must, some Time or other, overtake them, if they persist in their Oppressions! The Sword has long hung over their Heads, by a very slender Thread, || and

|| ' There are now allowed to be in our West Indies at least 230,000 Negroe Slaves, and it is allowed too, that, upon the highest Calculation, the Whites there, in all, do not amount to ninety thousand Souls. This Disproportion shews so clearly at the first Glance how much the Colonies are endangered, both from within and without; how much exposed to the Assaults of a foreign Enemy, and to the Insurrection of their own Slaves, (which latter Circumstance in *all our Islands* keeps the People in perpetual Apprehensions) that it may be a just Cause of Surprize, that no Measures whatsoever are taken to correct this dangerous Irregularity.'

An Account of the European Settlements in America, Vol. II. Chap. x. P. 117.

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the Avarice † of the Creol seems gradually to be preparing an Instrument for the Punishment of his own Injustice and Cruelty ! For though the Negroes are already so numerous in our Colonies, that the Community is very justly thought to be endangered by them, yet, for the Sake of a little private Gain, the inconsiderate Planter endeavours as much as possible to evade those wholesome Laws, which prescribe the Employment of a certain Proportion of white Servants ; so that the Tenure of his Life and Possessions thereby becomes daily more and more precarious.

May God avert the impending Danger ! O that my Countrymen may have Grace to discern the Enormity of their Errors, and speedily correct these Abuses ; not merely because in Point of sound Policy it is incumbent on them for Self-Preservation so to do ; but also for Conscience Sake !

I may perhaps be severely blamed by those who have West Indian Connections, for having thus charged our Colonies with Injustice, Cruelty and Oppression. The Accusation, indeed, is heavy, but not slanderous ; because there is but too much Foundation for it. Nevertheless I do not mean to charge all Slave-holders as equally guilty of *tyrannical Licentiousness* : there are undoubtedly some worthy Gentlemen among them, who would scorn to abuse their Power.

† ' Their Avarice in these Particulars makes them blind to the Hazards, to which they expose the Sum total of their Affairs.' (Folio 118. same Author) (See the whole Chapter.)

However, I must observe, that a mild and gentle Behaviour towards Slaves doth not excuse the Practice of Slave-holding; because it only alters the Degree, not the Nature, of the Oppression. And though some few Planters and Masters use their Slaves so well as to render their Condition perhaps comfortable, yet this cannot justly be admitted as an Argument for the Toleration of Slavery; because Men are not endowed with an equal Share of Moderation and Prudence, and because the Cruelty and Oppression of Slaveholders in general, and their unchristian Negligence, with Respect to the Instruction of their Slaves, sufficiently demonstrate, that a *Toleration of arbitrary Power* is unjust, impolitic, and destructive.

The Passions and Frailty of human Nature insensibly increase with the Power of acting uncontrouled; and Masters are generally depraved and debauched in a proportionable Degree, as their Slaves are debased; so that it is plainly inconsistent with Religion, Reason and Equity, to permit an absolute despotic Power of one Man over others.

I cannot therefore esteem any Man a Friend to true and *loyal* † Liberty, let his Profession of it be ever so avowed, if, at the same Time, he contends for an *absolute Property in Slaves*. Neither

† There is *Loyalty* even in the Love of Liberty; for true Loyalty, according to the strict Meaning the Word, consists not merely in a zealous Attachment to the Person of a Sovereign, but includes likewise a conscientious and incorruptible Observance of all those moral, as well as temporal, *Laws*, which are calculated for the mutual Benefit and Happiness of Society,

can such a one have any equitable Pretence to the Enjoyment of his own Liberty, who denies Freedom to others.

He cannot be said to regard Liberty farther than he finds it convenient to himself, and answerable to his own private Purposes. He likes the Liberty of acting according to his own Will, without deigning to consider how far his Brother may be affected by it : this Kind of *selfish Liberty* differs not from *Tyranny*.

It must therefore be allowed, that the open and avowed Practice of *Slave-holding* casts the blackest Dishonour on my Countrymen, not only as Christians, but as *Englishmen* ; whose Knowledge and Experience of the Value of civil Liberty serve but to render them the more inexcusable and unchristian, when they attempt to deprive others of that inestimable Blessing,

F I N I S.

both a one have any equitable reference to
the enjoyment of his own liberty, who denies
it to others.

The reason behind to regard liberty rather
than he finds it convenient to handle, and as-
turbable to his own private property. He
has the liberty of acting according to his own
will, without being to consider how far his
freedom is affected by it: the kind of li-

erty which is not a matter of course
is not that to be allowed, that the open
and stated exercise of liberty calls for
the freedom of the community, and
the liberty of the individual; who
is not a member of the community of the
state, and the liberty of the individual
is not a matter of course, when the state
is not a member of the community of the
state.



